

Abstract

The ignition of a gas discharge lamp is followed by a warm-up phase. During the warm-up phase, as much power must be converted in the lamp as enables the lamp to make a transition to an operating phase. In this process, currents flow at a damaging level into the electrodes of the lamp in the case of operating devices of the prior art. The invention presented avoids these high currents by means of an operating device having the following features:

- a regulation device which is suitable for regulating the power of connected gas discharge lamps to a desired power,
- a setting device that is suitable for limiting a lamp current of connected gas discharge lamps to a limit value,
- a detection device designed to output a signal to the control device if a limit value setting is too low, in order to put a connected gas discharge lamp into a state in which the lamp assumes the desired power, and
- a control device that prescribes the limit value for the setting device and increases the limit value if the detection device sends a signal to the control device.